

Low-methane Angus thrive

At a glance



Who: Bob and Anne Davie

What: beef

Why: reducing carbon footprint

Where: Phillip Island

Report: JOHN PARRY

WHILE others talk about it, beef producers Anne and Bob Davie are actively reducing their carbon footprint.

The Phillip Island couple, who breed prime Angus cattle, are working with the Western Port Greenhouse Emissions Project.

They have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions, reduced waste to landfill and improved their water efficiency.

Productivity and profitability have also improved.

"Cattle that produce less methane put on weight quickly, and with less feed," Bob said.

"The faster the weight gain, the quicker we can turn them over. That means less overheads for each kilogram of meat that we sell. An added bonus is that we reduce our carbon footprint."

Bob and Anne, who supply beef under the Enviro meat brand, believe ge-



Green view: Anne and Bob Davie at their Phillip Island property, where they are enjoying higher returns while reducing the carbon footprint.

netics play an important role in reducing methane emissions.

They use only high-Breedplan bulls and take advantage of Gene Star DNA testing on their AI bulls to maximise feed efficiency and tenderness.

They are also about to begin trials using two feed additives, a vegetable oil and the wine by-product grape marc, to see if they can reduce methane emissions.

Good pasture management also helps to lower methane production and increase soil carbon levels.

Trials have recently be-

gun of a new mix, called Triple Octane, which comprises the ryegrass varieties crusader, barbaria and ohau and lasts for about four years.

Like most farmers, more rain is something the Davies would like to see.

Meanwhile they have reduced the farm's reliance on mains water for stock by using a bore.

"Mains water isn't unreasonable expensive at the moment, but we don't know what will happen in the future," Bob said.

"Also, there is a carbon cost in delivering the water to the farm."

One strategy they are using to reduce evaporation from dams and troughs is to install the protective silicon film Aquatain.

Bob said that while it was difficult to quantify the savings, he believed they were considerable.

The Davies are also extracting water from their dam using a siphon instead of a pump, to save energy.

They use solar pumps and a windmill, have installed a Quantum heat pump for domestic use and have re-insulated their house.

"Most of the things we've done have been fair-

ly simple, yet they've made a difference," Bob said.

"We are hoping we can encourage a few more farmers to think about doing the same."

The Davies will host a field day on Tuesday, May 12 to show farmers how they have managed to reduce their carbon footprint.

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